

With REASONS humbly offered
for the REPEAL of it.



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(A)

THE
NATURE and CONSEQUENCES
OF THE
Sacramental Test, &c.



R. DE RAPIN THOYRAS, in his *Dissertation on the Origin of the Government of England*, observes that the Form of it is different from all others at this Day in the World, that it is for Substance the same which was introduc'd by the *Northern* Invaders into most Countries of *Europe*, upon the Fall of the *Roman Empire*; by the *Saxons* into *Germany*, the *Franks* into *Gaul*, the *Visigoths* into *Spain*, the *Ostrogoths*, and after them the *Lombards*, into *Italy*. But all these Nations have changed their Forms; *Britain* alone has retain'd the main of her ancient Constitution, not without many Hazards and Struggles, which our Ancestors us'd to esteem very glorious. The *Norman Conquest* made indeed a great Alteration, for it was not to be expected that a Prince who had acquir'd and maintain'd his Title by Force of Arms, should voluntarily relinquish any

part of his Power, and submit to Conditions of Government; yet in some time the Spirit of Liberty reviv'd, and the People taking advantage of Difficulties which embarrass'd their Kings, especially arising from Debates about the Right of Succession, recovered their former Privileges, and at last, after many unsuccessful Attempts, nay and tedious intestine Wars, settled the Government on the old *Saxon* Foundation, establishing the Limitations of the Regal Power, and the Rights of the Subjects, by the *MAGNA CHARTA*.

The Preservation of this *limited Monarchy* has been thought by *true Britons* in every Age, of the greatest Importance, and worthy of their warmest Zeal. As the supreme Power of Legislation is divided between the Prince, the Nobles, and Representatives of the People, the Safety of the Constitution must consist in preserving the Rights of each inviolable, and preventing the Encroachments of any of them on the rest. But as, in Fact, our Histories show that the greatest Confusions in *Britain* have taken their Rise from the Encroachments of the Crown, or those who acted under the Cover of it's Name and Authority, on the Rights of the People; true *British* Patriotism exerts it self, in asserting and maintaining the Liberties of the Subject against the Invasions of the Prerogative, whatever Shapes and plausible Appearances they may put on. In all the Schemes and Measures which the Agents and Abettors of Arbitrary Power have pursu'd, the Lovers of their Country still oppos'd them, first by legal, especially parliamentary

mentary Methods, and at last by Force, when Things were pusht to Extremities, threatening a total Subversion of the Constitution. This was the Case in the Reign of King *Charles* the First, and in the Reign of King *James* the Second, which gloriously ended in the REVOLUTION, an Event which will ever be remember'd with Pleasure, by all the Friends of the Protestant Religion and of Liberty, as having secured those most important Interests, and fix'd the Government of these Nations, and the Measures of the Civil Power and Civil Subjection on their true Basis; and in consequence of it, these Nations having the great Advantage of Princes on the Throne, who were animated with a noble Zeal for the Liberties of their People, and an anxious Care to transmit them safe to Posterity, have obtain'd excellent Laws to prevent those Inconveniencies and Sources of Danger to Liberty for the Future, which the Iniquity of former Reigns had given them reason to apprehend. And our Parliaments are still framing new Acts for further securing their own Freedom and the Freedom of Elections, which shews they are sensible of some remaining Defects, and that however safe they are under the Reign of the present Possessor of the Crown, yet all Danger in case of a corrupt Administration afterwards, is not fully provided against.

The Case being so apparently, and it being the avowed principle of *Britons* to contend for legal Limitations of the Royal Authority, in order to prevent its Encroachments on the Rights of the Subjects in any future time, (and the best
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and most effectual Limitations have been obtain'd under the best Kings, who as the tender-hearted Fathers of their People, were willing to secure their Liberties against any injurious Attempts which might be made upon them by their Successors;) the Case I say being so, methinks it as well becomes our wise and good Patriots to consider the State of the People themselves, the several Parties among them and their divided Interests, how they affect the public, and what Measures ought to be kept among them, in order to the common Safety. For as the legal Constitution is preserv'd by a Balance of Power between the Prince and the People, so the natural Strength of a Society consisting in the Numbers and Force of the Members which compose it, when they are form'd into opposite Factions, one threatening and endeavouring, at least always inclin'd to the Destruction of the other, (which ought indeed by all means to be avoided, and good Governors will take all possible Care to avoid it, and to unite all the Subjects in one common Interest; but when, in Fact, there are such Parties irreconcilable to each other,) the public Safety must depend on a due Balance between them.

And here nothing will more obviously occur to any one who is at all acquainted with the State of our public Affairs, than the religious Differences which began at the Reformation, and have continued ever since. The Parties most opposite to each other are the *Papists* and the *Protestant Dissenters*, both generally discountenanc'd by the Government, sometimes in a
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greater, sometimes in a lesser Degree. There are, at least have been, Parties too within the Establishment it self, commonly known by the Name of HIGH and LOW CHURCH, or WHIG and TORY, whose Characters, contrary Views and Interests, it would be too tedious to mention, with their several Sub-divisions, which are largely explain'd by RAPIN. In general that Author observes that the *Tories*, even those whom he calls *Moderate*, whatever Zeal they profess for the Constitution, always incline the Balance to the side of the King, and are prone to severity against the *Presbyterians*. On the other hand the *Whigs*, professing the same Zeal for the Constitution, incline the Balance to the side of the Parliament, and favour the *Dissenters*. By this means the opposite Extremes, the *Papists* and *Protestant Dissenters* become attach'd to these different Parties, the *Papists* are reckon'd by that Author, a *Branch* of the *Tories*, and the *Dissenters* are included in the Denomination of *Whigs*, tho' it ought to be acknowledg'd that some of the *former*, are sincere Enemies to *Popery*, and many of the *latter* have a hearty Zeal for the Ecclesiastical Constitution.

But that we may more clearly understand how these Parties in Religion, Both *Non-conformists* to the *Establish'd Church*, affect, or are capable of affecting, the public Interest, and consequently judge what Temper and Conduct ought to be observ'd towards them, it is necessary to look into the History of former Times, and what Part they acted, when the State of Affairs

Affairs gave them an Opportunity of shewing their Inclinations and exerting their Strength. In the Reign of K. *James* the 1st. the Measures of the Court were very obnoxious to the Nation, as tending to diminish the Power and Privileges of Parliament, and at the same time to favour *Popery*; for it may be taken as a certain Maxim in *England*, since the Reformation, that the Interests of *Popery* and arbitrary Power are inseparable. No Prince ever aim'd at a dispensing Power without indulging the *Papists* beyond the Allowance of the Law, who were always grateful enough to do him what Service they could in his Designs, and sensible enough to know that the only resource to their Affairs must be from unhinging the legal Constitution. But in the Reign of *Charles* the 1st. these Measures were pusht more openly and violently, till they ended in the Civil War, in which the *Papists* universally espous'd the *Royal Cause*, as afterwards they were the distinguish'd Friends and Favourites of K. *Charles* the 2^d, and *James* the 2^d, pursuing the same Schemes and treading in the same Paths.

On the other hand, the *Protestant Dissenters* suffered Persecution under all those Reigns, as it is certain they on all occasions constantly and uniformly adher'd to the Cause of Liberty; since the religious Difference among *Protestants* in these Kingdoms (or the *Schism* as it's call'd) had a being, there never was a struggle between the Crown and the Subjects, never any Opposition of Interests or Debates about the Limits of the Prerogative, wherein the
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Body of the *Dissenters* did not vigourously adhere to the Rites of the Civil Constitution, and oppose the Invasions which were made upon it: So there never was a Design carried on for exalting the Power of the Prince above the Laws without persecuting them, which was the *first* Step taken by the Abettors of Arbitrary Power, in order to weaken the Cause of Liberty by crushing so hearty Friends to it, and the *safest* because the *High-Church* Party, so far from taking Umbrage, were gratified by it, not discerning its tendency to the subversion of the Constitution, and even of the *Church* it self. But those who best understood the State of the Nations, and were most firmly attach'd to the true *Protestant* and *British* Interest, have been sensible that the Persecution of *Dissenters* was incompatible with it, though they have been sometimes indolent enough not to see, or not to consider it seasonably. Especially after the Restoration of K. *Charles* the 2^d. when the Nation run on for some time in a mad Career of licentious Loyalty, the *Dissenters* felt the Effects of *French* and *Popish* Counsels: But when the pernicious tendency of those dissolute and violent Courses was observ'd, and it appear'd necessary to think of some Expedients to prevent the utter Ruin of Liberty, Moderation towards the *Dissenters* was one of the first that occur'd. Accordingly, that truly *Protestant* and *English* House of Commons which form'd and pass'd the famous *Exclusion* Bill, form'd also another in favour of *Protestant Dissenters* which passed both Houses; but it was

lost (Bishop *Burnet* says) in this Manner, ‘ On
 ‘ the Day of the Prorogation the Bill ought to
 ‘ have been offered to the King, but the Clerk
 ‘ of the Crown, by the King’s particular Or-
 ‘ der, withdrew the Bill. The King had no
 ‘ mind openly to deny it: but he had less mind
 ‘ to pass it. So this indiscreet Method was
 ‘ taken.’ The Commons finding themselves thus
 disappointed, made the following Resolution,
 ‘ That it is the Opinion of this House, that the
 ‘ Prosecution of *Protestant Dissenters* upon
 ‘ the Penal Laws, is at this time grievous to the
 ‘ Subject, a weakning to the *Protestant* Inte-
 ‘ rest, an Encouragement to *Popery*, and dan-
 ‘ gerous to the Peace of the Kingdom.’ I men-
 tion this as an authentick Testimony; other
 more private Declarations, to the same Purpose,
 of great Men, both *Clergy* and *Laity*, in the
 Reign of K. *James* the 2^d. when a Deluge of
Popery and Slavery was ready to swallow us up,
 are very well known.

But the late happy *Revolution*, which brought
 so many and great Advantages to these King-
 doms, explain’d the Constitution it self and im-
 prov’d it, ascertain’d the Liberty and Property
 of the Subject, and the Measures of the Royal
 Power, has at the same time plac’d the Affair of
 Religion on a better Foot than it was before, by
 granting a TOLERATION to the *Protestant Dis-*
senters, and thereby freeing them from a great
 Part of that Persecution they were till then ex-
 pos’d to, which was the Reproach of a *Protes-*
tant Nation and Church. This is a Point now
 so clear and so well fix’d, that scarcely is there
 any

any Party among us who profess a dissatisfaction with it. The Toleration seems to have become ev'n a Part of the Establishment it self, and, like the Rights of the Bishops, inviolable. But the Question is, whether the *Dissenters* do not still continue under some Grievances and Incapacities which are inconsistent with the *common Rights of Subjects*, and render them less useful to the Public, than otherwise they might be? They are disqualified by Law for Civil and Military Employments, which as it carries the appearance of a public Censure, at least Distrust, for no Reason but their scrupling Conformity to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church, so it disables them to do such Service to the *State*, as if that legal *Bar* were out of the way, their Condition fits them for, and their Affection inclines them to.

This Question ought to be consider'd and determin'd chiefly with a regard to the public Interest and Safety, which in this Case as I observ'd before, depends on preserving a Balance between opposite Parties, particularly the *Papists* and *Protestant Dissenters*. It appears from the Resolution of the *English* House of Commons already mention'd, to be the Opinion of the wisest Men and best Patriots in *Britain*, that Severity against the *Protestant Dissenters*, is an *Encouragement to Popery*, a *weakening the Protestant Interest*, and *dangerous to the public Peace*; the Foundation of which Opinion must be, that the *Papists* being the most dangerous Party in these *Protestant* and *British* Dominions, the *Protestant Dissenters* ought

not to be so discourag'd as to be render'd incapable of joining in the common Defence against them. In order therefore to apply this Rule to the Point before us, let us consider the Condition and Conduct of these Parties in *Ireland*, that we may judge whether continuing the incapacity of *Protestant Dissenters* for Civil and Military Employments, be reasonable, or if it be not as the Prosecution of the *English Dissenters* upon the penal Laws was, in *K. Charles the second's* Reign, *grievous to the Subject, a weakning the Protestant Interest, an encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom.*

As the *Papists* are every where the known inveterate Enemies of the *Protestant* Religion, and by their Principles led to Rebellion, Persecution, Treachery, and the most inhuman Barbarities, for entire putting it under the Direction of their Spiritual Guides; there is no Place in the Dominions belonging to *Great-Britain*, scarcely any in the World, where they have acted more zealously up to those pernicious Principles than in *Ireland*. The Massacre of the *Protestants* begun in the Year 1641, and executed with such unparallel'd Cruelty and on so great a Number of innocent People, without distinction of Age or Sex, is an Instance of the outrageous Fury of *Popish* Zeal never to be forgotten, and it would show the most unaccountable Stupidity in the *Protestants* of *Ireland*, at least, not to take all possible and just precautions against any Attempts of the like kind for the future, while the Number and Strength of *Papists*

pists give us reason to apprehend Danger from them. That tragical Event is not the leſt to our preſent Purpoſe, if, as the *Papiſts* pretended, their Inſurrection was begun and their bloody War carried on by the Orders of K. *Charles* the 1^{ſt}: Such a pretence might ſerve the Purpoſe of claiming their Eſtates forfeited by Rebellion in K. *Charles* the 2^d's Reign, when the Notion of abſolute Monarchy in *England* prevail'd, and the appearance of what was then call'd *Loyalty*, was ſufficient to juſtify or excuſe very bad Actions, but it will not leſſen the Horror of the Crime and the Miſchief done by it in the Opinion of a ſober *Proteſtant* and Lover of Liberty, to whom Barbarity is as ſhocking and as much to be guarded againſt, when acted under the Colour of Authority, as without it. Rather indeed, as its certain the *Irish* Rebellion was in favour of that unhappy Prince's unjuſt Proceedings againſt the Parliament and the Nations, (whatever Orders he might give concerning it) it ſhould direct true *Proteſtants* and *Britons* to look with a jealous Eye on the *Irish* Papiſts, as the Tools of Arbitrary Power, and ready to lay hold on the diſtracted State of public Affairs as a proper Opportunity for ſerving the Cauſe of their *Church*, and committing thoſe Barbarities againſt *Proteſtants* which their religious Principles incline them to.

K. *James* the 2^d. after the Example of his unfortunate Father made a bold Attempt on the Conſtitution, and the Friends he chiefly relied on, were the *Irish* Papiſts: He fill'd his Army with them, and when he was forc'd to abdicate
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the Throne of *England*, they were his last Refuge: He put himself at their Head in order to reduce *Ireland*, hoping after he had effected that, to make a Descent with a greater Advantage upon *Britain*. In both these Commotions what was the State and Conduct of the *Protestant Dissenters*? In the former, they had a large Share of Sufferings; it will never be pretended that the *Papists*, on any occasion, were more favorable to them than to the Members of the *Establish'd Church*; rather their known Principles of Civil Liberty, as well as their utter Abhorrence of *Popish* Superstition, mark'd them out to a peculiar Severity. In the last War they heartily join'd with their Fellow *Protestants* in opposing *K. James*, and his whole dangerous Project was defeated by the noble Stand made for the Cause of Liberty and the *Protestant* Religion, by the *Northern* Protestants at *Inniskilling*, and especially in *London-derry*, where with unparalleled Resolution, they endured the last Extremities of a long Siege, and, undisciplin'd as they were, baffled his whole Force, tho' commanded by himself in Person. It is needless to insist on a Fact so notorious to all the World, and of which we have the most Authentic Testimony in the Resolution of the House of Commons in this Kingdom, *Anno* 1695, and the Resolution of the House of Commons in *England* 1698, *That the Services and Sufferings at London-derry, were very eminent, and of great consequence to his Majesty's Service, and the preservation of the three Kingdoms, that these were principally the Sufferings and Services of*
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the Protestant *Dissenters*, I presume no one will dispute, it being so well known that very few of another Denomination had any share in them.

The Use to be made of these certain Facts is not that the Crimes of the *Papists*, their Rebellion and their Cruelty, in the Reigns of King *Charles* the 1st and King *James* the 2^d, should be reveng'd on their Posterity; let them be treated with all the Clemency and Tenderness which can possibly consist with the public Safety: perhaps the Laws now in Force against them are, in some instances, too severe; and it ought to be esteem'd the Glory of the present and the preceding Reign, that there has been so great Lenity used towards them, even beyond the allowance of the Law strictly interpreted. I wish any means could be found out whereby the Government might be secur'd of their Affections, which is the best Security any Government can have of Subjects, or any method devised whereby its Support should become so sensibly their Interest as to prevail against all their religious Prejudices. But for the Protestant *Dissenters*, it seems so obvious as to need no Illustration, that they who had so often and successfully signaliz'd their Zeal for the Protestant and *British* Interest, should not be by Law discourag'd, nay disabled to do any such Service for the future, in a Country where the *Papists* are still vastly superior in Strength and Numbers to Protestants of all Perswasions, and where the *Dissenters* are allow'd to be half of the Protestants in the whole Kingdom, and the *Northren Dissenters* the most united Body of Protestants in it. And therefore to

repeal the *Sacramental Test* is a Method of strengthening the Protestant Interest liable to no Exception, it is a Security against the *Papists* which cannot be charg'd with the least Degree or Appearance of Persecution.

That learned Prelate the Bishop of *Clonfert*, in his excellent Sermon on the 23^d. of *October* last, *preach'd and publish'd by Order of the HOUSE OF LORDS*, fully represents the dangerous Circumstances of the Protestant Interest in this Kingdom from the present State of the *Papists* in it. Having prov'd that the *Roman Catholics* now have the *same Principles in Religion and Government*, which in their Forefathers produc'd the Rebellions of 1641 and 1688, and having answer'd the plausible Argument for a Change of their Principles from their *late famous Address* to his present Majesty, he says, p. 17. ' This I
' scruple not thus publickly to affirm, that if a
' full and impartial Inquiry be now made into the
' present State of *Popery in Ireland*, 'twill too
' plainly appear that all the Laws which have
' from time to time for above forty Years been
' made for that end, have neither lessen'd the
' Number, nor broken the Power of the *Papists*
' among us : But both continue at this Day so
' great, that if at any time since the Re-
' volution, they were dangerous to the Pro-
' testant Settlement, they are so at this Day.' His Lordship farther observes, p. 18. that ' if
' former Rebellions have been *contriv'd, pro-*
' *moted, and carried on by ROMISH ECCLESIAS-*
' *TICKS*, as our Laws declare, and our Histories
' attest; There are not wanting at this Day a
' vast

‘ vast Multitude of them to work up the ill Dispo-
 ‘ sitions and Principles of the People to a new one.
 ‘ Again p. 19, and 20. ‘ If these *Romish* Eccle-
 ‘ siasticks were only such, and in such Numbers
 ‘ as are necessary to perform Divine Offices a-
 ‘ mong the deluded People, ’twould perhaps be
 ‘ reasonable to let them pass without Observa-
 ‘ tion. But,

‘ When their Number is vastly greater than
 ‘ any one can pretend to be necessary for these
 ‘ Ends, so great as even to be burthensome to the
 ‘ People themselves : When they are general-
 ‘ ly of the worst kind, *Regulars*, Men under
 ‘ the more immediate Influence of the Pope, and
 ‘ sworn to him : When they, as well as *Reli-
 ‘ gious of the other Sex*, are settled in *Frater-
 ‘ nities* and *Nunneries* in the Chief Towns and
 ‘ Villages, and at or near the Sight of the old Mo-
 ‘ nasteries, and there at least, appear in the Ha-
 ‘ bits of their several Orders : When besides
 ‘ these, there are *Popish* Archbishops, and Bi-
 ‘ shops more in Number, and as well known as
 ‘ the Protestant ones : When ’tis notorious that
 ‘ they keep up a Regular Jurisdiction, have their
 ‘ Appeals to *Rome*, and very probably at some
 ‘ Seasons, a *Nuncio*, or *Legate* from thence to
 ‘ Superintend their Affairs : When the *Roman
 ‘ Catholicks* affect to be open and publick in the
 ‘ Exercise of their Religion, erect pompous
 ‘ *Mass-houses* in the most conspicuous Places of
 ‘ great Cities, and adorn them with all the ex-
 ‘ pensive Pageantry prescrib’d or countenanc’d
 ‘ by their absurd Superstition : When ’tis further
 ‘ observ’d, that their Wealth and Power increase,

‘ that their Influence is greatly felt in some parts
 ‘ of the Kingdom, and that it begins to appear
 ‘ in others, where ’till of late ’twas hardly sus-
 ‘ pected: When this is the true present State of
 ‘ Things, Who, who that has a just Regard for
 ‘ the Protestant Religion, for His Majesty’s Per-
 ‘ son and Government, or for our present happy
 ‘ Settlement under it, can at such a Juncture a-
 ‘ void thinking a little seriously, Whither all this
 ‘ tends, and what may possibly one Day be the
 ‘ End thereof?

And in the Conclusion, ‘ Since the a-
 ‘ vow’d Principles of the Church of *Rome*
 ‘ are really dangerous to our present Set-
 ‘ tlement, and the publick Peace ; the great
 ‘ Law of self-preservation directs and empowers
 ‘ us to use proper means to secure ourselves a-
 ‘ gainst them ;’ and having in the same paragraph
 mention’d some particulars, before more largely
 insisted on, he concludes in these Words, ‘ It
 ‘ becomes us to be always on our Guard, care-
 ‘ fully to observe every considerable Increase of
 ‘ their Wealth and Power, nay ! to take strict
 ‘ Notice of all uncommon and dangerous Ap-
 ‘ pearances, lest the continued Influence of these,
 ‘ bad Principles, working secretly with other
 ‘ Causes of Dissatisfaction and Uneasiness, may
 ‘ in time produce the greatest Evils, and again
 ‘ involve this Nation in Blood and Confusion’.

Since the Case is so, and we may be assured a
 Person of his Penetration and Prudence would
 not suggest such things without sufficient Ground,
 I leave it in Judgment with his Lordship, and
 with every one who is well affected to the Pro-
 testant

testant and *British* Interest in *Ireland*, whether any Expedient be more unexceptionable, or more naturally offers it self than the encouraging of Protestant *Dissenters*, by taking off their legal Incapacity for public Service ; since their Behaviour for so long a time, particularly in every critical Juncture, and all Dangers which threatened the Nation from the Attempts of *Papists*, has undeniably prov'd their hearty Zeal for the Protestant Religion and their Country, and since their Interest in these most important points is inseparable from that of the *Establish'd Church*.

The Truth is the Imposition of the *Test*, and continuing it, in such a State of the Kingdom, appears at first Sight so great an Absurdity in Politicks as can never be accounted for, unless there be, in other respects, some very urgent Necessity for it. But I doubt such a Necessity can never be demonstrated, and that if the Foundation of exclusive Laws, on account of religious Differences, which do not affect the Peace and Interest of Civil Societies as such, be impartially enquired into, they will appear to be as indefensible in point of Justice as of Policy. Some Gentlemen seem to have fallen into this way of Thinking, without examining very carefully the Grounds of their Opinion, that appropriating places of Trust and Civil Power to the Members of the *Establish'd Church*, is a Prerogative which belongs to the Ecclesiastical Establishment it self ; for the Interests of the Church and State are inseparably interwoven, the Church being an essential part of the Constitution ; and tho' conscientious *Non-conformists* are to be treated with Indulgence, still they ought to remember they are in an infe-

rior Condition, and it were Arrogance in them to hope they should be on a Level with Churchmen. But if these Gentlemen would give themselves leave calmly to consider this Matter, if they would lay aside the Prejudices which may arise from Party Zeal, and the Honour and Pleasure of having Places of Profit and Marks of Esteem confin'd to those of their own Denomination, if they would examine impartially the true Interest of the Nation, and the Interest and Design of Christianity together with the peculiarities of the Church Establishment, and how far the Things on which so great Stress is laid by the Act excluding *Dissenters* from Places of Trust, affect those Interests; if, I say, they would calmly consider all this, it's probable the point before us, would appear to them in a different Light. In order to which, I take leave to offer the following Queries to their serious Consideration.

QUERY I. Whether the Necessity and Usefulness of Civil Government be not evident from, and Men's associating under it be not founded on the Light of Nature, antecedent to, and independent on any divine Revelation? and whether the proper and immediate End of Civil Government be not the common Safety and Happiness of those who are united under it, considered only as rational and social Creatures in this World? and consequently whether those who are entrusted with the supreme Civil Government, that is, with the Force of the Civil Society, ought not to use it wholly and solely for that end, and whether they ought not to countenance and

encourage all the Subjects in performing Service to the Public; without any other Distinction in the Choice than what arises from the Difference of their Capacities and apparent good Affections to the Society?

QUERY II. Whether the Christian Religion has made any Change in this Matter? If it has directed Men to unite on different Foundations and with different Views from what the Light and Law of Nature dictates? One who reads the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* without prepossession, and is resolv'd to form his Notions by it, would think it leaves the State of Kingdoms and Commonwealths just as it found them, that it does not meddle with such Affairs, any otherwise than it does with all the Relations and Offices of social human Life, that is to exalt and improve the Springs of Action in the Minds of Men, and to enforce from a Regard to God and the Motives of another World, what Reason had before prescribed as fit and right; but, that it does not alter the Foundations of Civil Society, or make any new Conditions of Government. When Christianity first appeared in the World, it was represented by it's Adversaries as dangerous to the public Peace, evasive of the just Authority of Kings, and the Privileges of Subjects; and indeed it would be so, if the Measures of Civil Power and Subjection were set on another Foot, if Princes were to govern by other Maxims, and the Title of Subjects to the Privileges of the State, did depend on different Conditions from what they did before. What Civil Government would bear the introducing a new Scheme which
should

should intirely unhinge it's ancient original Constitution, give a new direction to it's Force and appoint the distribution of it's Rewards and Punishments, not according to the Services done to, or the Trespases committed against the Political Society, but according to novel Opinions and Practices; which, whether right or wrong, had no relation to it's Interests. But the Case is really quite otherwise, for tho' the Author of our holy Religion set up a *Kingdom*, yet himself declares it was *not of this World*, not govern'd by the Maxims of Worldly Policy, nor it's Laws enforc'd by Worldly Sanctions. He did not appoint that embracing the Doctrines of his Gospel, and conforming to the Institutions prescrib'd in it, should entitle some Men to the Rewards, Preferments, and Honours of Civil Society, and rejecting them, should expose others to outward Penalties, Incapacities and Reproach, much less that such Distinctions should be made in the external Condition of Men, by the different Senses in which the particular Declarations of his Word might be understood by his profess'd Disciples, or the different Ceremonies and Modes of Worship which might be used among them. Those who plead for the *Sacramental Test* and other exclusive Laws like it, proceed, in their reasonings, on different grounds. In general, they pretend that such Laws are necessary for the safety of the Public, comprehending the *Church* and the *State*, or the *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil Establishment*: But in explaining the incorporation of the *Church* with the *State*, and the necessity of securing

securing the *former* as well as the *latter*, by a legal exclusion of all who are disaffected to it, they divide from each other, nay the same Author from * himself. Sometimes the Ecclesiastical Constitution is represented as design'd for Political Ends, that is, for preserving public Order and Peace, and therefore it must be subject to such regulations as the supreme Governors shall think fit, to make it agree with the Interests and Views of the Civil Community: At other times that same Ecclesiastical Constitution is contended for, as the *Religion which the Nation received, as delivered by CHRIST and his Apostles*. It is impossible to reconcile these Notions, as they are applied to the same Purpose, *viz.* to found the necessity of securing the Church, by incapacitating all for Civil Employments who scruple Conformity to some peculiar Usages, as a Test of affection to it. The former, it's plain, leaves Civil Governors at Liberty to alter, amend and regulate the Church Constitution and the Securities thereof, as they shall judge most expedient for the Safety and Peace of the State; the other binds them down to the present Model as unalterable, by the superior sacred Authority of CHRIST, and to weaken the Securities of the Ecclesiastical Establishment is, according to that Scheme, to hurt the Interests of Christianity. But however inconsistent these Principles be, as the Founda-

* *The Dean of Chichester's Vindication of the Corporation and Test Acts.*

tions of the *Sacramental Test*, or any other Securities to the Church of a parallel Nature, we may consider them severally with a View to the present Argument, and how far either of them does justify or require the continuance of the Act in force, for the exclusion of Protestant *Dissenters* from all Places of public Trust. And therefore to proceed, I propose

QUERY III. Supposing that the Ecclesiastical Constitution depends on the Civil Policy, and is subject to such Alterations in its Form and Securities as the Interest of the State may require, whether *receiving the Sacrament according to the Usage of the Church of Ireland* be reasonably and justly made a qualification for Civil Employments, and whether it's being made such a legal qualification, tends to promote the Interest of the State? If it be not so, but on the contrary hurtful, then according to this Supposition, that the Church-Constitution and it's Securities are subordinated to the State, it ought to be repeal'd. To justify the *Test* upon this Principle, it should appear to have some connexion with the public good, that is, that a Man's conforming to it is an Evidence of his better Capacity or his better Disposition to serve his Country, than the contrary. But it will be difficult to shew that receiving the Sacrament according to the Mode of the *Establish'd Church*, rather than that of the Protestant *Dissenters*, is a substantial Proof of greater fitness to serve the Government, for Example, in the Station of a Magistrate or a Military Officer. If it be alledg'd that receiving the Sacrament according

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to the Usage of the Church of *Ireland* is a Mark of Affection to the Ecclesiastical Constitution establish'd by the State, and consequently of a Regard to the public Order and Peace, the Preservation of which was intended by that Establishment: I answer first that the learned Bishop of *Salisbury*, in his Book entitled *The Common Rights of Subjects Defended*, has fully shown both from Reason and Experience, that the Sacramental Test never had in it self, nor ever was supposed either by Conformists or Nonconformists to have any manner of relation to a Man's inward Affection to the Ecclesiastical Constitution; and therefore could not be appointed for that end. It was originally design'd, in *England*, for excluding *Papists*, whom their Head and Leaders would not allow to hold Communion, in the Sacraments, with the Protestant Churches, which they declared to be no Christian Churches. But however it be applied, that excellent Author demonstrates (and indeed it must appear very obviously to any attentive Person) that it cannot reasonably be accounted an Evidence of a Man's approving the whole Constitution of the Church (of the greatest Part whereof, he may be ignorant;) nay nor so much as his esteeming the establish'd Form of administering the Sacrament, preferable to the Manner of the *Dissenters*, but barely that he judges it lawful: And therefore if the *Sacramental Test* be intended as a Proof of Affection to the establish'd Church, it is very ill cholen for that Purpose. But

Secondly, Supposing that receiving the Communion with the Establish'd Church were a mark

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of Affection to, or Approbation of the Ecclesiastical Constitution, which in this Case, can mean no more than the Form of Church Government and the Ceremonies, the Points in difference between the Church and *Dissenters*; still the Question remains what relation that has to the Interest of the Civil Society; may not he who disapproves some ceremonial Parts of the Constitution, and therefore is led by his Conscience to fix his Communion with another Church not Establish'd, be as good a Subject and as well dispos'd to do Service to the Public as he that approves it all? and therefore supposing the *Sacramental Test* to be some kind of Security to the Church, that is, to the establish'd Forms and Ceremonies, and certainly it is contended for only as such; is it a Security which it becomes the Wisdom and Justice of the Nation to continue, under the Pretence of it's being for the Advantage of the State, when it is really to the Prejudice of the State, by incapacitating a great many for it's Service, who are as well affected to it's Interests as any of their Fellow Subjects, and by infringing their otherwise indisputable Rights?

That poor Pretence that Places of Trust and Profit are not the Rights of any particular Men, and therefore the *Dissenters* are not deprived of their Rights by being excluded from them; that Pretence, I say, would scarce be worth taking notice of, were it not that it has been insisted on by Men of very good Sense, which shows how far Prejudice, and particularly the Zeal of a Party will bias the minds even of the Wise Strange! that so obvious a Distinction does not occur, as
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that between the actual Possession of a Place and a legal Capacity of it. To the former no Man has a Right till he be chosen or appointed by such as have a proper Authority, to the latter every Subject has a right unless he forfeits it by a Crime. A parallel case will make this very plain. Particular Gentlemen of the Establish'd Church, suppose for Example, Lawyers or Clergymen, have no Right to the Office of a Judge or a Bishop, unless legally appointed: but if any of them should be declared incapable of such Promotions by an express Law; I believe they would think themselves deprived of their Rights, and very much injured, unless they were guilty of some Offence which deserv'd such a Punishment.

QUERY IV. If the *Sacramental Test* is to be considered as a Defence of the Religion delivered by CHRIST, how does it answer that end? If by the Religion of CHRIST we mean that which is contain'd in the *New Testament*, acknowledg'd by all Protestants to be the only perfect Rule of Christianity, does it depend upon, or was it design'd by it's Author to be recommended and supported by Human Laws? Any one who impartially reads the Gospel, would think that it's main Intention is to enforce the Duties it prescribes, summ'd up in universal Righteousness, from a Regard to GOD and JESUS CHRIST, and from the Motives of another World, or that *the End of it is Virtue and Charity out of a pure Heart and a good Conscience and Faith unfeigned*. How can Human Laws contribute to this? all the Intention and Effect of them is only to produce outward Professions and outward Acts;

and so far as these Professions and Acts are influenc'd by a Regard to Human Laws, so far they are defective in Christian Sincerity. If in all the Actions which Christianity enjoins or is supposed to enjoin, it be absolutely necessary to our Sincerity and Acceptance that we see them founded on the *New Testament*, then it is also necessary that every Man be left at liberty to search and to judge for himself : But in controverted Points, and a diversity of Usages, concerning which, Christians are divided in their Opinions, to determine one by Human Authority, and enforce it by the Penalty of excluding all from Civil Employments who do not comply, is a violation of that Liberty, and consequently, it so far tends not to defend and promote true and sincere Religion, but the contrary.

Besides, we ought to consider the Matters which the *Sacramental Test* is intended to defend, and is only, in any Sense capable of defending, and of what Importance they are to Christianity. Whatever other Things the Ecclesiastical Constitution may contain, the only Points wherein the present Question is concern'd, are the Points in difference between the *Establish'd Church* and *Dissenters*, because in these only the *Sacramental Test* can be pretended to be a Defence of the Constitution against the *Dissenters*. No one can alledge it defends the *New Testament* and the liberty of Christians to search it impartially, and conform their Practice to it, according to the best Judgment they can make of it's true meaning. These are Rites which concern the very Essence of Christianity ;
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but it cannot be pretended that the *Dissenters* invade them, or that the *Sacramental Test* secures them against Force and Violence. But if it be the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, the Superiority of Bishops above Presbyters, the Jurisdiction of the Spiritual Courts, the Vestments and Holydays, the Forms of Prayer contain'd in the Liturgy, the Sign of the Cross in Baptism, and kneeling at receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper: If these and such as these, be the Points which the *Sacramental Test* can only be supposed to secure, the Question is of what Moment they are in the Christian Religion or to the Designs of the Gospel? Is a Man the better Christian for his approving or disapproving them in his Opinion, or for doing or forbearing them in Practice, and may we not apply to this Case as Parallel what St. *Paul* says of Meat, 1 Cor. 8. 8. *Meat commendeth us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we eat not are we the worse?*

QUERY V. Whether the *Popish* Church of *Ireland* was not once as much a Part of the Constitution, as the *Protestant* Church of *Ireland* is now? If it was, can any reason be giv'n why it should not have been secured, and why the *Popish* Churches establish'd in *France*, in *Spain* and *Italy*, should not now be secured in the same Manner, that is, by Acts excluding all *Nonconformists* (i. e. all *Protestants*) from Places of Power and Trust under the Civil Government? This Point is set in a clear and strong Light by the Bishop of *Sarum* in the Book before mentioned, whose Words I shall transcribe, only

only putting *Ireland* for *England*, and leaving out a very few Words which peculiarly relate to the Book he was answering, p. 210. ‘ If the ‘ *Establiſh’d Church* of a *Country* be the *State* ‘ or a Part of the *Civil Constitution*; or, if the ‘ *Eccleſiaſtical Constitution* of a *Country* be ‘ the *Government*, or Part of the *Public*, in ‘ ſuch Senſe as to be juſtly defended and ſupport- ‘ ed upon the ſame *Civil Principles*, and by the ‘ ſame Sort of *Civil Methods* of *Self-defence*: ‘ If this be ſo, then, this not only in the Event, ‘ will be applied and conſtantly made uſe of in ‘ all *Countries* equally; but with equal Truth ‘ and Juſtice *may* be made uſe of to the ſame ‘ purpoſes every where. Theſe general Princi- ‘ pals of *Civil Defence*, turn’d to the Uſe of ‘ *Church Self-defence*, are as good, as juſt, and ‘ as righteous in *France*, or *Spain*, or *Italy*, ‘ as they are in *Ireland*; and the general Argu- ‘ ment drawn from them concludes as ſtrongly ‘ and as juſtly for all the ſame *Hardſhips* upon ‘ *Nonconformiſts* (that is *Proteſtants*) as it ‘ can do againſt any *Nonconformiſts* in *Ireland*. ‘ For it is not drawn from any Privilege that we ‘ *Chriſtians* of our *Establiſh’d Church* have ‘ above thoſe of all other Nations, to be more ‘ hard and ſevere upon all *Differents* from us, ‘ becauſe we have a more *excellent*, that is, a ‘ more *Chriſtian Church* than any others have; ‘ (which would infer the contrary;) but from ‘ thoſe *general Principles* of *Self-defence*, ‘ which are no better *here*, than they are *every* ‘ *where*; but indeed are equally good, and ‘ therefore equally to be made uſe of as a com-

‘ *mon Right*, by every *Public*, every *Communi-*
‘ *nity*, every *Government*, and with the same
‘ Justice that they can be made use of in this
‘ Country.

‘ It was as righteous, according to this Argu-
‘ ment for the *Papists* in all Parts, to deny to
‘ their *Dissenters* at first, that is, to all who
‘ join’d in the *Reformation*, the *common Rights*
‘ of Subjects: And it is as righteous now, ac-
‘ cording to the same Argument, in *Popish*
‘ Countries, to deny to *Protestants* those *com-*
‘ *mon Rights*; as it is in *Ireland* to deny them
‘ to *Nonconformists*. Now, that *Reasoning*
‘ which defends a *Protestant Church* by the
‘ same *Principles* which equally defend the
‘ Interest of all *Popish Churches*, cannot be
‘ just, nor truly for the Interest of the *Protes-*
‘ *tant Cause*. And this therefore, I say, as
‘ one ground, upon which *Protestants*, as *Pro-*
‘ *testants*, ought always to reject it.’

The same Author largely shows from p. 224,
that the Principles which justify the exclusion of
Nonconformists from all Civil Offices, merely
for their Nonconformity, will justify the most
cruel Persecutions that ever have been practis’d
in the World, on the account of religious dif-
ferences. Some of his Words are, ‘ The Prin-
‘ ciples of Civil Self-defence applied to Matters
‘ of Religion, or to *Ecclesiastical Constituti-*
‘ *ons of Realms*, must hold equally good in the
‘ application of them to all degrees of Oppres-
‘ sion, or Force, or Persecution, which are
‘ equally necessary to that *Self-defence*. There
‘ can be no difference made in this Case by any
‘ con.

' consideration, but that of their not being
 ' *necessary* to this *Self-preservation*. And
 ' this Consideration is so far from having any
 ' Place here, that their Necessity is as evident,
 ' as it is in Cases of *Civil Self-defence*. As
 ' therefore in civil Self-defence the highest De-
 ' gree of Punishment is lawful, only because it
 ' is *necessary for Self-preservation*, and, by
 ' that Necessity becomes as lawful as Imprison-
 ' ment, or any lesser degree of *Punishment* :
 ' So where lesser degrees of Hardship, or Suffer-
 ' ing, or whatever it is called, are not sufficient
 ' for Self-defence to any Ecclesiastical Constitu-
 ' tion of a Realm; the greatest degrees become,
 ' by this Necessity as lawful and as justifiable as
 ' any of the *lesser*.

Our Ancestors, at the Reformation, proceed-
 ed upon quite different grounds ; their grand
 Principle was, and necessarily must be, for it
 is the very Basis of the Reformation, that every
 Man has a right to judge for himself in Matters
 of Religion, and that this right ought not to be
 restrain'd by Acts of Parliament, by Temporal
 Rewards and Punishments, and in Matters pure-
 ly of Religion and Conscience, annexing world-
 ly Emoluments to some Opinions and Usages,
 and a deprivation of Civil Privileges to others.
 If this right might be so restrain'd, what pre-
 tence had they for acting in opposition to the re-
 straints which were laid upon them by the Laws
 then in force ? But if they acted justly in defiance
 of all human restraints ; if they recover'd their
 freedom with so great Difficulty, and maintain'd
 it with so great Resolution and Constancy, with
 what

what Consistency can it be thought, they should not transmit the same Freedom to their Posterity ; but instead of it appoint for them a disputable Form of Church Government and Ceremonies of Worship, restraining by penal Laws their Liberty of examining and judging for themselves. If our Reformers had chosen the *Presbyterian* Model, and rejected the Ceremonies, as some other Protestant Churches did, and some of themselves inclin'd to do ; in that case, would the Gentlemen of the Church of *England* or *Ireland*, supposing them to think as they do now, that their *own Constitution* is the best, be of Opinion, that the *other directly opposite Constitution* should be secured by exclusive Acts of Parliament : And is it not a good Rule, *whatsoever you would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* This leads me to propose, from the Reasonings of the Bishop of *Sarum* on the same Subject, another Query, which immediately relates to the *Sacramental Test* in *England*, but any one will see how easily it may be applied to *Ireland*, for what is an apparent Absurdity in the one cannot be justifiable in the other.

QUERY VI. Whether there be not the same Reason for exclusive Laws, and particularly a *Sacramental Test*, to defend and secure the *Establish'd Church* in *North Britain*, as to defend and secure the *Establish'd Church* of *South Britain* ? The *Kirk* of *Scotland* is established by Law, as well as the *Church* of *England*, nay, it is established by the *same Laws*, and declared to be a fundamental part of the Union, and unalterable : It is as much a part of the *State*, the

Ecclesiastical Constitution of the Kingdom, indeed of the *same Kingdom*, and therefore has a Right to be defended and preserved by the same Methods. Does not every Argument which can be pleaded for the one, equally hold for the other? why should not the Principles of civil Self-defence, and a Right in the *Public* to preserve it self against all who are disaffected to it, and particularly all who are disaffected to the *State Church* as a part of the *Public*, be applied in *Scotland* as well as in *England*? Do the Gentlemen of the Church of *England* reasonably think that they ought to provide against a probable Danger to their *Apostolical* Ecclesiastical Constitution, by excluding from all Places of Power and Trust, the *Presbyterians* who are its profest Enemies; and may not the Gentlemen of the *Kirk* of *Scotland* as justly think that they have a right to provide against Danger to their *Scriptural* Constitution, by excluding from Offices of Trust under the Government, *Episcopal* Men who zealously contend for another Scheme as the Religion delivered by *Christ*, who in former times found means to overturn the *Kirk*, and when the Power was in their Hands, cruelly persecuted the *Presbyterians*. The Tendency and Design of this Reasoning is, not to show that a *Sacramental Test*, or some such Security ought to be enacted for the *Presbyterian* Church in *Scotland*, as well as for the *Episcopal* Church in *England*; but indeed that no such thing ought to be in either, and that the Principles cannot be just, which by a natural Consequence establish Contradictions, and destroy on one side of the *Tweed* what they build on the other.

other. Can the Safety of the *same State*, the *same Public*, the *same Kingdom*, or the Safety of the Religion delivered by *Christ*, require that for the very *same* Opinions and Practices, Men should be rewarded in one part of the united Kingdom, and punished in the other?

QUERY VII. Whether the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* appointed by him solely for the Commemoration of his Death, be a proper Instrument and Means of Men's possessing Civil Offices, together with the Honours and Profits annex'd to them, of making a distinction among Subjects with respect to the Favours of the Civil Government, of excluding some Christians who scruple a particular Manner of receiving the Sacrament from all Civil Employments, and confining them to others; and whether this be not a crying Profanation and Abuse of that holy Institution, by debasing it into an *Engine of State*, and a *Political Tool*? If the nature of the Sacrament directs Men to make this use of it; if it appears by the original Institution that the blessed Author, the only proper Judge, appointed it for such a purpose, or if he has given us any reason to believe it was his Design that Men should appoint it to be an Inlet to worldly Preferment; if there be no other proper and effectual Instrument of conveying Civil Offices with the Profits belonging to them; if those Things be so, then the *Sacramental Test* is right, the Abuses consequent upon it, are only accidental, and no good Argument can be drawn from them for the repeal of it: But if every one of those Suppositions is evidently false, and the contrary

true, then the bad Consequences may be justly charg'd as the natural Effects of the Imposition it self, and are a strong Argument for taking away what is the direct occasion of profaning a sacred Institution of *Jesus Christ*. It is certain that *Conformists* themselves are thereby led, at least strongly tempted to receive that holy Ordinance for Ends and Purposes different from, nay contrary to, those for which *Christ* appointed it to be received. The Design of the Institution, as our LORD himself expressly declares, was this alone, that Christians should seriously and affectionately remember his Death; the *Test Act* enjoins the same outward Actions of eating Bread and drinking Wine at the LORD's *Table*, to be used as a Qualification for the Places and Emoluments of this World: Now these are purposes as opposite as Concerns Spiritual and Temporal, of this and of the other World, can be. It's true the Act does not forbid Men, in receiving the Sacrament as a Qualification for Offices, to remember *Christ's* Death, but it requires them to do it with other Views at the same time, which is it self a profanation. If it be alledg'd that it relates only to the outward Act and leaves Men's Minds at liberty to be employ'd in proper devout Meditations: Still it is at least, a very natural occasion of mixing worldly Views with their Devotion; must it not be difficult for any Man in such Circumstances, to abstract from those worldly Views, to receive the Sacrament at a certain time which the Law requires, within three Months after entering on the execution of his Civil Office, (his doing it
either

either sooner or later will not answer the End,) and in the Manner which the Law directs, so as to make legal Proof of his having received within the limited time; must it not, I say, be difficult for him to do this without designing to do it, or to act deliberately in pursuance of the legal Injunction, and knowing the importance of his Action to his Civil Interest, without having that legal Injunction and his Civil Interest, that is, worldly Views in his Thoughts; in other Words, to obey the Law without intending to obey it? And the very intention of obeying a human Law for worldly Advantage in receiving the Sacrament, is a debasing of the Sacrament, and mars the religious sincerity of the Communicant, which indispensably requires according to the Design of our Saviour's appointment, that he should perform that Action solely for religious Ends. But whatever the purpose of the Communicant be, if he has learn'd such a Skill in abstracting as, for avoiding Irreligion, to banish out of his Mind all Thoughts of obeying human Laws, while he is obeying them, and all Consideration of worldly Advantage, when that worldly Advantage is the very end of the most remarkable Circumstances attending his Action, such as the Time, and the necessary attestation of the Fact, which he must take care of; yet it's certain that the intention of the Law is to make the Sacrament a Mark of distinction between Subjects with regard to the favour of the Government, in order to bestow them on some and deny them to others, and is this agreeable to the intention of JESUS CHRIST in instituting
his

his Supper. And tho' it may be said that the stress is not chiefly laid upon *receiving the Sacrament* as a Badge of distinction, but upon the *manner of receiving it according to the Usage of the Establish'd Church*, which not being an Institution of *Christ*, is not liable to this Objection : That does not answer the Difficulty, because the Sacrament it self, an undoubted Institution of *Christ*, is still taken in as a part, at least, of the *Test* or Instrument of Distinction. If indeed the *manner of receiving* or the *Usage of the Establish'd Church* in so far as it is merely a human Appointment, were applied to any other Action, not religious, or not instituted by JESUS CHRIST for the Purposes of his Religion ; or if the manner of receiving, *according to the Usage of the Church*, made such an Alteration in the Nature of the Thing, that it should cease to be the Sacrament, the Argument would lose it's force. But since the *Test* is a *manner of receiving the SACRAMENT*, and since the *Usage of the Establish'd Church is not destructive of the very Being of Christ's Institution*, I doubt it will be impossible to vindicate the use which the *Test Act* makes of it, from the Charge of prostituting one of the most solemn Appointments of the Gospel, intended by it's *blessed Author* for the perpetual remembrance of *his Love in obtaining eternal Redemption for us by his Death*, to the mean unworthy purpose of being an Instrument of *Civil and Worldly Interest*.

Secondly, Upon the Supposition already laid down, which appears evidently true, that the Sacrament is not, in it's own Nature, or according

cording to the Design of it's Author, a proper Instrument of conveying Civil Offices, or of distinction among Civil Subjects, it follows that the *Test Act* is a snare to conscientious *Nonconformists* who scruple the manner of receiving the Sacrament according to the Usage of the *Establish'd Church*. There are indeed some *Dissenters* who practise occasional Conformity and judge it lawful, and some such there were in *England*, before the *Test Act* was made there; the effect of the Act with respect to them, is the same as with respect to constant *Conformists*: But there are other *Dissenters* who have conscientious Scruples against the manner of receiving used in the Church, and judge, at least doubt, and the *Dissenters* in *Ireland* are almost universally of that Opinion, that it is unlawful: To make that Form which their Consciences disapprove or doubt, the Instrument of their worldly Preferment, that is, to make the most important Consequences to their worldly Interest depend upon their complying with it, is to lay before them the strongest Temptation to act against their Consciences. The Rites which the *Dissenters* scruple are at best but indifferent; they are so weak as to think them sinful: It would seem in this Case from the Doctrine and Practice of *St. Paul*, that the Christian Law requires forbearing them, not laying *stumbling Blocks* in their way or Occasions of Falling, by laying them under a Necessity, at least violent Temptations, to act against the Persuasion of their own Minds. In a parallel case about which Christians were divided, the Lawfulness of eating all sorts of Meat with-

without Distinction, which some believ'd and practis'd accordingly, others were scrupulous about it, the Apostle did not interpose his own Authority; he declares his own persuasion that *nothing was unclean of it self*, yet so far was he from imposing that Opinion upon others, or a Practice contrary to their persuasion, while they remain'd unconvinc'd, that he would not so much as influence them by his Example, rather forbearing the use of his Liberty, than by doing what he knew to be lawful, induce any of his weak Brethren to do *that* in imitation of him which their own Consciences condemned: He resolv'd to *eat no Flesh while the World stood rather than make his Brother offend*; and severely censures some of the *Corinthians* who were Men of great Knowledge, for an indiscreet and uncharitable Use of their Liberty, because by their Example weak Christians were *embolden'd* to do what their Consciences did not allow, and thus (says he) *through thy Knowledge shall the weak Brother perish for whom Christ died. But when ye so sin against the Brethren and wound their weak Consciences, ye sin against Christ*, 1 Cor. 8. 11, 12. Is it to be imagin'd that he would ever have consented to annex temporal Functions to such disputable Points, and oblige, or at least strongly tempt, *weak* Christians to agree with the *strong* in practice, ev'n against their Consciences, by adding worldly Rewards to their compliance, and worldly Discouragements to their *Nonconformity*. The difference between the *Establish'd Church* and *Dissenters* in the Point now under consideration,

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the manner of receiving the Lord's Supper, is parallel to that among the primitive Christians about *Meats* : The Matter is in itself indifferent, neither of the opposite Opinions or Practices commendeth us to God, in neither of them does the *Kingdom of God*, that is, pure Christianity, consist, they do not affect the Essence of true Religion, nor indeed of that particular Christian Institution, *the Lord's Supper*. And therefore, if the Judgment and Decision of St. *Paul* may be relied on, the Interposition of human Authority in this Case, which is done by the *Test Act*, by inducing the scrupulous *Dissenters* to conform to the Usage of the Establish'd Church by the temporal Reward of Civil Posts, and the Penalty of Exclusion from those Posts for Nonconformity, can never be reconcil'd to the Christian Law of Charity, but is directly chargeable with the Guilt of laying *Stumbling Blocks* or Occasions of Sin, in the way of weak Christians.

Thirdly, Another very great Abuse arising from the *Test Act* is, that it is the natural Occasion of profaning the Holy Sacrament, by laying the worst of Men under a Necessity of receiving it, in order to their worldly Promotion. For *Atheists*, *Infidels*, and *Debauchees* to receive the *Communion*, continuing obstinately in their Unbelief and their Wickedness, is the grossest Profanation of that most solemn Part of the Christian Worship that can be imagined : But, I say, the *Test Act* is the *natural occasion* of it, because it makes their Preferment and Gain in this World to depend upon it, which is their *All*,
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and must be supposed with such Men to prevail against every other Consideration ; there is nothing to restrain them from this horrid Profaneness but Conscience, and to that they have no Regard. To a Man who has no Fear of God in his Heart, who does not believe the Gospel, nor expect a future Judgment, the outward Act of receiving the Sacrament, (which he considers no otherwise than as eating Bread and drinking Wine) is as indifferent as any other Action in Life ; and what should hinder his doing it, since it is made the necessary legal Qualification for his obtaining a profitable Post. Nor is this a groundless uncharitable Supposition ; (tho' if there were no Instances to be produc'd in Fact, it would be just to argue from it, against a Law naturally productive of so bad Consequences, since it's far from being unreasonable to suppose there may be in a Christian Country, and even among our selves, Unbelievers and profligate Persons, who may sollicite for Civil Employments, and have Interest enough to obtain them :) but the greatest Advocates for the *Test* themselves acknowledge, *they have heard much and just Complaint of the Iniquity of Men who have come to the Sacrament without Devotion, nay, sometimes with * open Contempt of it, merely to satisfy the Letter of the Law.* After such an Acknowledgment and Complaint, which may be depended on as just, Truth having extorted it, it is astonishing that Christians, especially *Christian Divines*, should

* *The Dean of Chichester's Vindication*, &c. p. 13.

ever open their Mouths in defence of such a Law, nay that they do not call for the abolition of it with the utmost importunity : A Law, which I do not say only is the *Occasion*, but directly the *Cause* of so great profaneness; for what can a Law be said to *cause* if it be not obedience to it self; now that profane receiving the *Sacrament*, or rather receiving the *Bread and Wine* in the Manner and Form appointed, *without Devotion*, nay, *with open Contempt of it*, is to all intents and purposes as truly obedience to the Law as the most worthy communicating, which, comprehends the inward affections and dispositions of the Mind, but these do not fall within the reach, nor can reasonably be supposed to be the effect, nor, indeed, the intention of any human Law.

If the reasoning I have used be just, it must hold equally at all times, and independently of all particular Circumstances, because it is built on these general and unvariable Foundations; the Essence and the very Design of our Civil Constitution, nay of all Civil Associations, the Nature and Genius of Christianity, the Basis of the Reformation, and the original Institution and End of the *Lord's Supper*. I always think it is the surest way of discovering *Right* and *Truth*, to bring a debated Point to some fixed and certain Principles, and to try what connexion it has with, and what relation it has to them. Whatever appears necessary to the ends of Civil Society, and to promote the public Good, by encouraging, without partiality, all the Members of the Society, to exert their utmost Power for it's de-

fence : Particularly in *Britain* and *Ireland*, whatever evidently tends to preserve a Balance of Power in the Legislature, and a just Balance between the opposite Interests in the Kingdoms, ought to be allow'd by every true *Briton*. Whatever is a just Consequence from the general Design of the Gospel, or from the particular Nature and End of it's institutions, and from the spiritual Nature of *Christ's* Kingdom and his Laws, which alone bind the Conscience, which are only enforced by the Motives of another World, and only fulfill'd by Sincerity, not outward Form, should be assented to by every Christian; and whatever appears to be fairly inferr'd from the essential Grounds of the Reformation, and necessary to maintain it's Rights consistently and uniformly, every Protestant should readily agree to. By these Principles, and these alone, let the equity and reasonableness of continuing the *Sacramental Test* be tried; if it be consistent with them, then let the Lovers of Liberty, of their Country, and of the Protestant Religion contend for it, and for imposing yet farther hardships on the Protestant *Dissenters*; but if, on the contrary, it appears upon a fair and impartial inquiry, to weaken the Cause of Liberty, and the Securities of our happy Civil Constitution; if it appears inconsistent with the Maxims of Christianity, the Nature and Design of it's institutions, and the Right of Christians and Protestants; then let every generous Patriot and sincere Protestant declare himself openly for repealing it, and without fear or regard to
 Party.

Party Interest, do what is proper in his Station, in order to obtain it.

But the *Sacramental Test* may be considered in other Views, and with relation to more particular Interests and Circumstances, such as that of the *Establiſh'd Church*, the *Protestant Succession* in the present *Royal Family*, the Condition and Conduct of the *Dissenters* themselves, and the State of the Nation, when it was impos'd, and now while it continues in Force: And tho' there are already in the preceding Pages some hints with respect to several of these points, yet a more particular and distinct Consideration of them all, will give light to the Question, whether the *Test* ought to be repealed or not.

First, We may enquire how it affects the Interest of the *Establiſh'd Church*; and this, no doubt, is a matter of very great Importance. From this Topic the strongest Arguments are drawn, for continuing the *Test*, that it is alledged to be a Security to the *Ecclesiastical Establishment*. What better Security, it is said, can there be than a legal Exclusion of all from Places of Power and Trust who scruple Conformity to it? But the Force of this Reasoning rests on a Principle which is, at least, very disputable, namely, that the Church is best secured by weakening and lessening, not the Prejudices and Objections but the Civil Power, and legal Capacity of all who have conscientious Scruples against her Communion. It is indeed the Policy of this World for contending Parties to pursue all Advantages against each other, and the side which happens to be uppermost never thinks it self safe enough, till

till its Adversaries are so weaken'd that no farther Danger is to be apprehended from their Power. But if the *Church* be at all the *Kingdom of Christ* and not wholly a political Faction, I doubt other Maxims would better fit its Constitution. One would think that the Interests of the *Church* and of *Religion* should, at least, not be altogether so incompatible, that the Defence and Propagation of the one must be the Ruin of the other. Now it's certain that Religion can never be propagated by Force; but without Force, this Argument supposes the Church must be destroy'd. The Gentlemen who argue thus for the Security of the Church from what is called the Principle of *Civil Self-defence*, ought to consider (tho' they seem often to forget it) whither their Argument tends; and that, as I observ'd before from the learned Bishop of *Sarum*, it will justify the most cruel Persecution on account of religious Differences. Wherever there is such a Right of *Self-defence*, there is a Right to all the Methods which are *necessary* to it; if lesser Penalties are found insufficient for the Preservation of the *State*, greater Punishments are just, till, *this Necessity* still urging, the *greatest* are righteously inflicted. If then the *State Church* has the same Right of Self-preservation, when moderate hardships on *Nonconformists* are found ineffectual, such as Exclusion from all Civil Posts; she has by the same Reasoning, that is by urgent Necessity a Right to use the greater Severities of *Imprisonment*, the *Gallies*, *Dragooning* and the *Inquisition*. Now, in the Name of all that ever was called Christianity and Protestantism, are these

these the proper Methods to secure a Christian and Protestant Church?

There are two ways of treating Men in order to be secur'd against any harm from them; the one is Kindness and Persuasion, the other Force and Defiance; the last, Civil Societies are oblig'd to have recourse to, and indeed without having it always in their Power, and using it sometimes, they cannot subsist; the former, Humanity as well as Religion recommends where it is safe and will answer the End. Now the Question is, whether treating the *Dissenters* softly, allowing them the full Possession of their Civil Rights in common with their fellow Subjects, and delivering them from such an irritating Brand of Infamy, would not be more effectual to prevent any Danger to the Church from them than the present incapacity they are under by the *Test Act*; or in other Words, whether the Church be safer by their Affection and Friendship, or by their Weakness? The *Dissenters* have the same Sentiments of Humanity and the same Dispositions with the rest of Mankind; they are won, like others, by Kindness; their Relentments are provok'd by ill Usage. Is it not likely their Prejudices against the Ecclesiastical Establishment would abate rather than increase, and that they would be less inclin'd to lay hold on any opportunity that should offer of meditating a change, at least by Force and Violence, if they found themselves easy under it, and that they were treated with Moderation and Clemency? The Effects which the Toleration has had upon their Temper and upon the Security
and

and Interest of the *Establish'd Church*, show whether the Methods of Lenity towards them, or of Severity be the best. The Penal Laws against *Nonconformists* were made for the Security of the Church, and yet experience convinc'd the Legislature it self, that they *were grievous to the Subject, a weakning the Protestant Interest, an Encouragement to Popery, and dangerous to the Peace of the Kingdom*; for which Reasons they were repeal'd. What has been the Consequence? just what might be expected from so wise and good a Law; the public Peace is better secur'd, *Popery* discourag'd, the Protestant Interest strengthen'd, the Church her self more secure by her Indulgence, or rather the Indulgence of the Legislature: And it is certain in Fact that the *Dissenters* are better reconcil'd to her Communion, and more of them have actually come over to it, than ever were prevail'd with, by Persecution. It is very likely that if the *Sacramental Test*, the great remaining Grievance and invidious Mark of Distinction were taken away, there would be still a nearer Coalition of Protestants, a firmer Union of their Affections, and thereby the *Church* render'd more safe in the unenvied Possession of all her legal Rights.

Shall it be said that the Church of *England* was once overturn'd, and with it the Monarchy, by some disaffected Persons getting Power into their Hands, and therefore it is reasonable to provide against the like Danger for the future, by taking care that no such Persons shall be entrusted with Power? this Argument will be easily answered by considering the Confusions of that un-

unhappy Period it refers to with the Causes of them, both in their Commencement and in their Progress and Consummation. Every body knows that the War against K. *Charles 1st.* was begun, and for a considerable time carried on by the *Long Parliament*; and that the Causes of it were, the Oppressions which the Nation had long groaned under, whereof no Redress could be had in a legal way, the illegal and arbitrary Proceedings of the Court and it's Ministers, and dangerous Innovations in Religion tending to *Popery*, as well as Usurpations upon *Civil Liberty* and *Property*. In all these Evils many Ecclesiasticks of that Time had a great Share, which rendered the *Mitre* as well as the *Crown* very obnoxious to the Generality of the People. But if that was unjustly begun on the *Parliament's* part, on whom is the Injustice to be charg'd? not on the *Dissenters* surely, for it's well known there were few of them in the Parliament: No Man of common Sense and Candour will say that the Commencement of the War was owing to their Capacity of holding Places of Power and Trust under the King; and if so, how can an Argument be drawn from it for incapacitating their Successors to hold any such Places. During the Progress, and in the Event of that War, great Changes happen'd; the *Constitution* both in *Church* and *State* was overturn'd. But to what Cause must all this be attributed? not to the *Dissenters* being legally capable of Civil Offices; but some Persons taking hold of the distracted State of the Nation as the proper Opportunity which did, and indeed the only one

which could present it self, seiz'd the supreme Power and abolish'd both the *Regal* and *Ecclesiastical* Authority, which they were therefore able to accomplish, because the grievous Abuse of *both*, had dispos'd the People to comply with that, otherwise impracticable, Scheme.

Upon the whole, it appears that the true Inference from the History of the *Civil Wars*, and the fatal Catastrophe of K. *Charles* the first and the *Church* is, not that the *Dissenters* should be oppress'd and depriv'd of the *Common Rights* of Subjects, but that all possible Precautions should be taken against illegal and arbitrary Measures, against all Attempts to exalt the *Prerogative* above the Laws, against the Influence of the Clergy to forward and succeed such Attempts, and the strong Temptations which their Dependance on the Crown lays them under, to use their Influence for that end, for these were the real and immediate Causes of former Disorders: Let any one judge whether to prevent such Evils, and the Mischiefs which may arise from them, the abridging of the *Dissenters* Liberty and Capacity of public Usefulness by the *Sacramental Test*, be a proper Expedient. I do not intend to insinuate the least Reflection on the present *Administration*, as if any Dangers were to be apprehended from it, like those of K. *Charles* the first's Reign. As the *late King George* of glorious Memory, and his *present Majesty* succeeded to the Throne upon a Foundation directly opposite to that of *Arbitrary Power*, I hope it may be said upon it's Ruins; I am persuaded that the Protestant Interest and Liberty in all the *British* Dominions,

ons, were never better secur'd (so far from being endanger'd) by any *Government* than *theirs*; nor do I intend to reflect on the Clergy, particularly the present Set of *Bishops* in *England* and *Ireland*, many of whom have show'd the most eminent Zeal for our *Happy Civil Constitution* and the Principles of the *Reformation*, and for *both*, some of them have been the ablest Advocates that any Age could ever boast of: But as the Argument before us is drawn from Facts long ago past, the Tendency of it is to a Provision against Dangers which are not present; and since the Misfortunes of former Times must be brought into Consideration, it cannot be unreasonable to show which are, and which are not, the true Precautions for the public Safety naturally arising from them; nor do I at all doubt but *My Lords the Bishops* are as sensible as any Men, that some of their own Order and of the inferior *Clergy* had a very active hand in bringing on the Calamities of the Civil War, still furiously intent on the Persecution of *Dissenters* as a necessary part of their destructive Schemes; and that, since themselves are engag'd in a *contrary* Interest, they will be as much dispos'd as any to pursue *contrary* Maxims.

But if the good Affections of the *Dissenters* are not to be depended on, if Love to their Country and it's Peace, and Gratitude for so great a Favour as putting them on a Level with their Fellow Subjects in the same station, will not restrain them from dangerous Attempts; let us consider what a mighty Accession of Power they will obtain by the Repeal of the *Sacramental Test*,

which should make them formidable. All that is pleaded in their behalf, is that they may be admitted to a *Capacity* of Offices, not that they shall be actually *possess* of any, for Offices must be convey'd in the proper legal Channel ; and considering the present Number and Figure of *Dissenters*, it would show too great a Diffidence in the Merit and Interest of *Churchmen*, to apprehend that at any Time, by this means, they shall have such a Share of Authority in their Hands, as may give Occasion either of Envy or Fear. But still these Offices are to be executed under the Direction and Controul of the Supreme, Executive Power, and of the Laws establishing the Rights of the Church. What Reason is there then to apprehend that they will be able to overturn the Constitution ? If *that* is to be attempted at all, it must either be, by an open Rebellion, or in a Legal way and with Consent of Parliament. To suppose that the *Dissenters* will, in a peaceable state of the Kingdoms, without any provocation, nay enjoying a greater Indulgence than before, raise a Civil War, merely to alter the Legal Settlement of a *Form of Church Government* and *Modes of Worship* which they do not approve, but which are not impos'd upon themselves, is such a Chimæra that scarcely any Man will seriously believe it ; and it's as ridiculous to imagine they could possibly concert such a Design, and take the necessary steps towards accomplishing it, or indeed at all enter into it, with any, the least Probability of Success.

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But if this mighty Work of unhinging the Ecclesiastical Constitution, and exchanging the *present Episcopal Form* for *Presbyterianism* or some other Scheme of the *Dissenters*, (in the mean time there's the less Danger to be apprehended, because they are not agreed among themselves, and it's no more probable that the several opposite Parties would unite in any one of their own Schemes than in the present Establishment;) if, I say, this Work is to be accomplish'd in a Legal Way; then the supposition is, that the *King, Lords and Commons* will come into it. Perhaps it would offend some Gentlemen, tho' I know no reason why it should, to tell them that in *that* Case another Church would have the same Right to be established, which the Churches of *England and Ireland* had at the beginning, and have now; for what do we mean by an *Establishment* but the Sense of the Nation authoritatively declared by the *King, Lords and Commons*? And do they so far distrust the Reasonableness and Goodness of their own Constitution, as to fear it will not stand it's Ground in the Judgment of the Nation or it's Representatives, unless the Legal Discouragement of all who scruple it, by appropriating Civil Employments to those who *seem* to approve it, be brought to it's Aid and Support? An *Aid*, which religious Truth disdains, and a *Support* wholly foreign to the merit of a Church. But does any one seriously think this a likely Event? I dare say, the most sanguine *Dissenter* has no such expectation; at least, tho' he may imagine that his Opinions which appear to him true, will some time or other

ther prevail, yet he is not weak enough to believe that, because, if the *Test* should be repeal'd, a few of his Persuasion may in time have an equal Chance with their Fellow Subjects, to get some Civil and Military Posts, therefore the bulk of the Nation will be for *Nonconformity*, and the *Parliament* be induc'd to alter the Establishment. The Truth is, one can't help thinking that some People who make a great Cry for continuing the *Sacramental Test* as a Security to the Church, intend, at bottom, nothing more than a mean partiality in the distribution of the Government's Favours, and to strengthen their *Party*, by confining to it not the public Service but the profit of Employments. I beg leave to add here a few Words from the Bishop of *Sarum* to this purpose, p. 53. ' Take away the *Profits* ' and *Honours* of this World out of the *Questi-* ' *on*, and every Thing that can have any *Influ-* ' *ence* upon them; and I dare engage that the ' participation of the *Burthen* of *Offices* would ' in all Countries, be press'd and forc'd upon ' *Those*, who are *now* every where almost, *ex-* ' *cluded* from them.

It may not be improper here to look into the History of the *Sacramental Test*, to consider briefly the occasion on which it was impos'd, and whether the Conduct of *Dissenters* was, and continues to be such as to deserve that severe Censure of the Legislature. Every body knows that the Law enjoining the *Test* in *England*, was first made in the Reign of King *Charles* the second; and it appears plainly enough to have been originally design'd against the *Papists*, tho' the
Letter

Letter of the Law includes also Protestant *Non-conformists*, and it has been, since the Revolution, declared to extend to them. Let the World judge whether that was a time well chosen for such a Declaration, and for laying more explicitly and designedly such a hardship on the *Dissenters*, when they had suffered so long and grievously under King *Charles* the second and King *James* the second, thro' the influence of *Po-pish* Counsels, and when the Nations had so wonderfully escap'd a deluge of *Popery* and Slavery, which had begun to break in upon them, and in our deliverance from which, they were known to have so eminent and active a hand.

But in *Ireland* the *Sacramental Test* was never impos'd till the Year 1707, and a very little reflection will satisfy any impartial Person, whether it was then a proper return for the Services the *Dissenters* had done to the Protestant and *British* Interest. I have already observ'd and will not now repeat, what their behaviour was at the Revolution; the authentic Testimony giv'n to it, by the Resolutions both of the House of Commons in *England* and *Ireland*, already refer'd to, is sufficient to silence all Objections. And their loyal Affection to King *William* during his whole Reign, was, I believe, never question'd. After a Conduct so remarkably distinguish'd by the public acknowledgments of it's Loyalty and Importance to the Interest of the *three Kingdoms*, while the Memory of it was so recent and unsullied by the least appearance of unpeaceableness or disaffection to the Government, the *Dissenters* were extremely surpris'd to find themselves
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laid under a legal incapacity of rendering any more such Services to their Country, and rank'd with the *Papists*, always dangerous Enemies, whose bloody Attempts to extirpate the Protestant Religion and enslave the Nations, they had lately oppos'd with so great bravery and success. Indeed the unkind treatment they receiv'd, which they so little deserv'd, and which was so unpolitic, tending to weaken the Protestant Interest in a Country where the *Papists* are vastly superior in strength and numbers to Protestants of all Persuasions, was not to be imputed to the *Parliament of Ireland* as their contrivance; the Clause which enjoins the *Sacramental Test* having been tack'd in *England* to a *Bill* transmitted from the House of Commons here for *preventing the further Growth of Popery*. Scarcely could a Clause be contriv'd more disagreeable to the Title and profest Design of a Bill, or two things more unnaturally join'd together in one Law, than enacting, what the *Papists* called, great severities against them, and at the same time disabling the *Dissenters*, the most united Body of Protestants in the Kingdom, who had so lately maintained a glorious War against their Force, headed by K. *James*, and assisted by *French Auxiliaries*, to resist them. But the Measures were well enough concerted to answer secret Views directly opposite to those which were avow'd, and which it is not difficult to guess at, considering that those who had then a chief hand in directing such Affairs at the *British Court*, were either bigotted enough to risque the Protestant Interest for the Service of *High Church*

Church, or corrupt enough to serve the *Papists* themselves for private Gain.

The Gentlemen of the House of Commons, who fram'd the Bill to prevent the further Growth of *Popery*, instead of approving the Clause which was inserted, publicly declared their dislike of it, and their Resolution to take the first opportunity of repealing it, tho' at that time they unwillingly pass'd it, rather than lose a Bill they were so fond of. This Resolution has not been yet fulfill'd, for what Reasons our worthy Patriots themselves know best; but the *Dissenters* still rely on it, as, in effect, a Promise of their Representatives in Parliament to relieve them: and they have the greater Reason to expect this Favour, because their Behaviour since, still uniformly loyal and of a piece with their former Conduct, notwithstanding this new discouragement they labour under, justly entitles them to it. What turn of Affairs has there been wherein they did not show a zeal and firmness, worthy of the best Subjects, in adhering to the Protestant Succession, the chief Legal Security of the Protestant Interest and the Liberties of their Country? What Danger ever threaten'd the Nations and they did not meet it with unshaken Resolution to hazard their Lives and Fortunes for the public Safety? That ill-concerted Project of the *Pretender's* Invasion in 1708, found them ready to embark with their Fellow Protestants in the common Defence. The generality of them entered into the *Army* and *Militia* with chearfulness, pursuant to the Orders of the Government: (Without them the *Militia* in the

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North must have made a very poor Figure) and tho' a few, being surpris'd and without any Concert, made at first some scruple of taking the Oaths thro' Ignorance, and some difficulty of enlisting in the face of a new disqualifying Law, which was understood by many to extend to private Men, at least if they received any Pay; apprehending too that the Danger was not then extream; and especially, having some Officers set over them in whose Affection to the Protestant Succession they had no Confidence, no more than in their good Will to themselves. Yet, in the main, their unblemisht Loyalty appears so glorious on that and every other occasion to all sensible and unbiaſt Witnesses, that those who traduce them, are either Men of very little Understanding, or, I will venture to say, do not believe themselves, and rather envy than suspect what they pretend to reproach.

But a deeper Design was afterwards laid in the last Years of Queen *Ann* for overturning our happy Settlement and bringing in the *Pretender*; and tho', by a signal Interposition of *Divine Providence*, it was disappointed, and the Accession of the late King almost miraculously effected without blood, yet no true considerate Protestant can pass over that memorable Event, or rather series of Events without affectionate thankfulness to God for our surprising deliverance, an abhorrence of the wicked Devices of some for involving all that was dear to us as Men and Christians in one common Ruin, and a grateful remembrance of their Zeal and Steadiness, who with the utmost hazard to themselves, stood firm

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to the glorious Cause of Religion and Liberty. What Part did the Protestant *Dissenters* then act? It is not enough to say what all the World knows, that none of them entered into the Hellish Conspiracies of that time, the Protestants concern'd in those dark and horrid Scenes, were of another Denomination. Indeed all Parties were sensible that whatever Weight and Influence they had, lay on the other side; the *Whigs* trusted them as stanch Friends, the *JACOBITES* (who called themselves *Tories*, tho' some who went under that Name, were not resolv'd to go the length of letting a *Popish Pretender* on the Throne, but they went too far into the Measures which prepared the Way for him, particularly discouraging and persecuting Protestant *Dissenters*;) the *Jacobite Tories*, I say, regarded them as irreconcilable Enemies. The Truth is, no one Party of a religious Denomination in *Britain* or *Ireland*, were so united as they; indeed no one but they, in an inviolable Attachment to the *Protestant Succession*. And because it was of great importance to the Successor to know what Assistance he might depend on in these Dominions, if his Title should be opposed by Force, as every body then expected it would; therefore the *Dissenters* of *Ireland* entred into secret Concerts, and sent a Gentleman to the Court of *Hanover*, to assure his late *Majesty*, (then *Electo*r of *Brunswick*) they were firmly and unanimously resolv'd to maintain his Right in all Events whenever it should be oppos'd, and upon the first notice from himself, to take up Arms in it's defence, whatever the Consequen-

ces might be to themselves, either from the Laws in force against them, or the uncertain Event of a War. As this is certain Fact, and could, if it were necessary, be sufficiently attested, several of the Persons concern'd being yet alive, and the Gentleman himself who undertook and executed the hazardous Commission; it will not now be accounted treasonable; tho' if it had been discovered then, it might have cost some of the *Dissenters* very dear, and probably nothing could have prevented the discovery (for some Persons very active and zealous in the opposite Interest, are said to have got an intimation of private Steps which were taken in pursuance of it) but that good *Providence*, which by *one surprising Stroke* disconcerted all the measures of our Enemies.

Now what is the return the *Dissenters* ought to meet with, and what is the treatment due to them, in Justice, in true Policy, and in Gratitude? Is it that their incapacity of public Service should be continued, and that they should be discountenanc'd as dangerous Enemies to the Government and to the PROTESTANT SUCCESSION? One would think the contrary very evident; and that it may appear the more unexceptionable, not as the selfish suggestion of interested *Dissenters*, but the deduction which an *honest Mind* makes by impartial reasoning from plain Principles, I shall give the Argument arising from this true state of the Fact in the words of the Bishop of *Sarum*. His *Lordship* considers the reasonableness of continuing the *Sacramental Test* upon the Grounds pleaded by his Adversary for the
first

first imposition of it, by transferring the state of the Fact from the present times to thole soon after the *Restoration* of King *Charles* the second, and then he argues upon *the following Suppositions* * ‘ First, That there had been a *Pretender* to the Crown, against King *Charles* the second. ‘ Secondly, That quickly after the *Restoration* there had been an Attempt made in Favour of this *Pretender*. Thirdly, That the whole ‘ *Body* of Protestant *Dissenters* had, for about ‘ thirty Years before, giv’n all possible demonstrations of their Zeal for the *King’s* Right, ‘ and the Succession in his Family. Fourthly, ‘ That in the time of such an Attempt, they ‘ had to a Man, kept firm to his Interest, without so much as the suspicion of any the least ‘ leaning towards his Enemies who aim’d at his ‘ Crown. Fifthly, That the great Body of his ‘ *Enemies* concurring in this *Attempt* had been ‘ unfortunately made up of *Protestants* of another sort joining with *Papists*.’ (I beg leave to add, that while the Succession was in Danger by that fatal Conspiracy of *those other Protestants* and *Papists*, the *Dissenters* had enter’d into the most hazardous Associations for maintaining the King’s Right, and giv’n him assurances of their resolution to venture their *all* in his Service.) ‘ Sixthly, That at such a Juncture, during the ‘ Conflict, and after the Attempt had been dissipated, a *Parliament* of true *Britons* had been ‘ sitting, full of Zeal for their *King* and *Country*.

' I would take the Liberty to ask, in plain Terms,
 ' and in the Name of *all that ever was called*
 ' *political Justice or Wisdom*, whether, upon
 ' these Suppositions, it is possible to imagine that
 ' the *Corporation Act*, or any Act like it could
 ' have been made at that time in order to have
 ' excluded those from *Places of Power* and
 ' *Trust* merely upon account of religious Differences,
 ' who had not only demonstrated themselves to have been *no Enemies*, but the warm-
 ' est and most zealous Friends to that *Civil Go-*
 ' *vernment*, just then restored. I leave it to
 ' the most negligent observer of *late Affairs*
 ' to make the Application; But the Argument
 ' that results from hence, I shall just mention.

' The same Reasons which (supposing them
 ' to have subsisted at that Time) would have
 ' made a true *British Parliament* to have ab-
 ' hor'd the Thoughts of any such exclusive
 ' Acts, are of equal Force against the *Conti-*
 ' *nuance* of any such, supposing these Reasons
 ' to subsist now.

' But these Reasons would undoubtedly and
 ' justly have prevented all Thoughts of such
 ' *Acts* at that Time.

' Therefore, supposing them to subsist now,
 ' they as undoubtedly ought to lead to a Re-
 ' solution of *not continuing* them.'

Thus it appears, with regard to the PRO-
 TESTANT SUCCESSION, which has now ha-
 pily taken place, how reasonable it is to re-
 peal the *Sacramental Test*, and that granting
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that Favour to the Dissenters, can be disagreeable to none who have a just Sense of the many Blessings we enjoy, by the PROTESTANT SUCCESSION IN HIS MAJESTIES ROYAL FAMILY.

F I N I S.



1815-1816
1817-1818
1819-1820
1821-1822
1823-1824



1817

